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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 020672

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OIC PREL

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE: ANNOUNCING THE U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY TO
THE OIC

¶1. (U) This is an action request. See Para. 2.

¶2. (U) Department requests OIC posts notify host governments that the President has appointed Sada Cumber to be the U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Post should draw from the Envoy's official biography and the press guidance below. The Envoy's official biography, along with an official photograph, are posted on State.gov (search keyword: Sada Cumber). Posts are also encouraged to announce this appointment to the public and local media. End action request.

¶3. (U) Sada Cumber Biography:

Sada Cumber will assume his duties as Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on March 3, 2008. As Special Envoy, Mr. Cumber will serve as our representative to the OIC, and will seek to promote mutual understanding and dialogue between the United States and Muslim communities around the world.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Cumber was an entrepreneur and investor based in Austin, Texas. Mr. Cumber's business background is in senior management, marketing, and imaging technology. As an entrepreneur, Mr. Cumber has specialized in national and global network strategy, strategic marketing, business planning and institution building.

Mr. Cumber has founded eleven companies in technology-based industries, including Texas Global, an international strategic advising firm, and CACH Capital Management, an investment advisory and wealth management firm. Prior to his appointment as Special Envoy, Mr. Cumber also served as Chairman of the Board of TCMS-LLC, an intellectual property development company, and as Chairman of Sozotek Inc., an imaging technology company. Mr. Cumber has also served on numerous corporate boards and served as a speaker at the meetings of several national and international organizations, on topics including the ethics of persuasion, entrepreneurship and governance.

Mr. Cumber has been active in the public sphere, serving on the boards of various Texas-based and international organizations, including the Board of Directors of the Texas Economic Development Board (a \$300 million fund), the Texas Emerging Technology Fund (a \$200 million fund), the 15th World Congress on Information Technology, the Texas Business Council and the Governor's Task Force on Higher Education.

Mr. Cumber has also been active in civic organizations, advisory councils, and charitable foundations. Until recently, Mr. Cumber also served as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Malta in Austin.

Mr. Cumber is committed to using his multicultural background and extensive business, social, and political skills to promote cooperation across cultures, in support of international economic development, and to help advance

meaningful dialogue among the world's religious communities.

He has served on the board of directors for the Texas Foundation of Religious Studies and the Advisory Council for the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas.

Mr. Cumber was born in Karachi, Pakistan in 1951. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce and a Master's Degree in History, both from the University of Karachi. Mr. Cumber came to the United States in 1978 and has been an American citizen since 1986.

Mr. Cumber and his wife, Mumtaz, maintain their permanent residence in Austin, Texas. They have two children.

¶4. (U) Press Guidance

Q: On February 27 the President announced that the first-ever Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) would be Austin, Texas-based entrepreneur Mr. Sada Cumber. What can you tell us about this announcement?

-- The President announced in June 2007 his intention to appoint a Special Envoy to the OIC, as a part of his continuing commitment to actively engage with Muslim communities around the world. On February 27, he announced that Mr. Sada Cumber will be that Envoy.

-- &We just had a discussion about his mission, and the core of his mission is to explain to the Islamic world that America is a friend -- is a friend of freedom, is a friend of peace, that we value religion -- that, matter of fact, we value it to the point where we believe that anybody should be able to worship the way they see fit, and we respect that.⁸

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) President Bush, February 27, 2008

-- This marks the first time a U.S. president has made such an appointment to the OIC.

-- As Special Envoy, Mr. Sada Cumber will serve as the United States, representative to the OIC, and will seek to promote mutual understanding and dialogue between the United States and Muslim communities around the world.

-- Mr. Cumber will begin his duties as Special Envoy to the OIC on March 3, 2008. One of his first official duties will be to attend the Eleventh Annual OIC Summit, set to take place in Dakar, Senegal, from March 8 to 14, 2008.

-- Mr. Cumber will also be meeting with representatives of American Muslim communities and traveling to OIC member and non-member states to engage Muslim communities around the world.

-- He will also maintain formal contact with the OIC Secretariat, the Secretary General, the chairing country, and

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other member countries on important issues. He will follow OIC affairs and activities and seek to understand the views of OIC members and leaders, identify ways for the U.S. and the OIC to cooperate, and promote U.S. views on important policy matters that may come before the OIC.

-- Mr. Cumber is looking forward to leveraging his background to be particularly active in areas of common interest for the United States, the OIC, and OIC member states: cultural affairs, economic issues, youth, technology, human rights, humanitarian assistance, peace, and security.

-- Mr. Cumber will also seek to engage states as they advocate for moderation, and in that light we'd like to welcome statements the OIC has made in support of moderation, dialogue, respect, and understanding.

Q: Who is Mr. Sada Cumber? What are his qualifications for the job?

-- Mr. Cumber is a Pakistani-American businessman from Austin, Texas, who brings a unique skill set to the Special Envoy position.

-- He is a proven leader in the business world, with 25 years of experience in the technology industry, as well as active public sector involvement in business development and entrepreneurship.

-- In addition, he has long been interested in issues surrounding the strengthening of civil society in developing countries and economic development.

- He has a multicultural background, and extensive business and political skills to promote cooperation across cultures in support of these shared areas of interest.

Q: If asked: The President announced his intent to appoint a Special Envoy last June. Why did this appointment take so long?

-- The President wanted to make sure he found the right person for this important job.

Q: If asked: Does the appointment of this envoy mean that the United States is becoming a member of the OIC?

-- No. The United States is not seeking OIC membership or observer status, but we are seeking a more active role. We see the Envoy position as providing another opportunity for productive, respectful engagement.

-- The United States is home to millions of Muslims, and, like other states with Muslim populations, we think it's important to engage with the OIC.

Q: If asked: Did the OIC request this appointment?

-- The appointment was not requested by the OIC.

-- It is a Presidential initiative to further demonstrate the United States' commitment to engage with Muslim communities around the world.

Q: If asked: To whom does the Special Envoy report?

-- The Special Envoy will be housed within the State Department's Bureau for International Organization Affairs. He will report to both the Secretary of State and the President.

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